Joseph Alsop

Behind the Front Page

Who would suppose that Daniel Ellsberg, with all his stolen Pentagon documents, would be blaming the newspaper business, and also taking all blame from President Johnson, for the alleged Vietnam "deception" in the 1964 election? To non-television addicts, this will surely be news.

But on Tuesday night, on the Dick Cavett Show, Ellsberg did exactly that. He said he had been doing research on Johnson's campaign statements in 1964, and to his "amazement," he had found that these statements were "almost invariably misquoted recently." President Johnson, he declared, had given the country many "cues" concerning the danger in South Vietnam. He was then asked:

"Do you mean to give the impression of shifting the blame a little off Johnson and a little onto the press?"

"Very much so . . ." Ellsberg answered emphatically. "They (the public) did not hear what they did not want to hear. They still don't do that and the press cooperates . . . They don't hear what they don't want to . . ."

"So you and Vice President Agnew both have criticisms of the press?" was the next question.

"Yes," Ellsberg replied, again emphatically. "That is one thing we can agree on."

These were fairly sensational remarks, considering the source. The most extreme, plot-minded interpreter of the famous Pentagon Papers was certainly this emotional and obsessed man, Ellsberg. For days on end, the first receiver of Ellsberg's stolen goods, The New York Times, had filled its pages, including its front pages, with charges that President Johnson and his administration had indeed deceived the electorate in the 1964 campaign.

Yet here was Ellsberg saying the flat opposite—and even suggesting that the main fault lay with those in the press and public who "don't hear what they don't want to." You would have supposed, then, that Ellsberg's exculpation of President Johnson would have received equal play—a minimum, with the indictment so prominently printed day after day.

You would have been entirely wrong. Other newspapers printed what Ellsberg had to say about President Johnson, and one or two gave it considerable prominence.

In all editions of The Times, however, this latest Ellsberg story was played dimly, on the inside. Almost exclusively The Times story concerned Ellsberg's fairly silly and irrelevant attack on Dr. Henry Kissinger. And there was no mention whatever of the very noteworthy—but somewhat embarrassing—Ellsberg statements about the press and President Johnson.

There is a pendant to the foregoing set of contrasts of reporting and news play, moreover. In his television appearance, the unhappy Ellsberg persisted in his contention that a large majority of President Johnson's advisers had decided that it was needful to go to war against North Vietnam long before the 1964 election. The Times had previously stated, on the front page, that there was an administration "consensus" for bombing the North in early September, 1964.

This was mendacious. There certainly was deep fear of what the future might require. But there was no administration "consensus" for bombing, properly so defined, until February, 1965.

Shortly before Ellsberg's television appearance, Dr. Walt W. Rostow came up from Texas, also to appear on television, and to talk to leading Washington reporters. Obviously, Rostow had all the facts the Johnson Library contains, including many not contained in the Pentagon Papers.

In the most circumstantial manner, Rostow described the large majority against bombing in September, 1964. Yet Rostow, telling the truth, received only the dimmest inside coverage from The Times, as against the untrue story of the "consensus," on the front page.

As to the alleged bamboozling of Sen. J. W. Fulbright concerning the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, here is another excerpt from the Pentagon Papers, as yet unpublished, but still in the public domain. In an obviously planned colloquy on the Senate floor, during the debate, Sen. John Cooper of Kentucky asked Sen. Fulbright pointedly whether the famous resolution would give the President conditional "authority" to "use such force as could lead into war."

"That is the way I would interpret it," Sen. Fulbright replied, without any qualification whatever. So how was Sen. Fulbright bamboozled, one wonders? And just who is bamboozling whom at the moment?

BEHIND PRESIDENT Nixon's seemingly imperturbable decision to stand pat on his economic policy without a tax cut is a terrifying forecast from his chief budget expert that the deficit for the new fiscal year just begun might reach the outlandish peak of $35 billion.

That unbelievable possibility was reported to Mr. Nixon by George Shultz, director of the Office of Management and Budget, during the Nixon economic team's Camp David session that decided to take no action about the sluggish economy. Indeed, the unprecedented, uncontrolled rise of red-ink spending is why the Nixon team decided a tax cut, further widening the deficit, was out of the question.

Thus, Mr. Nixon is staking everything—the economy, his re-election, the state of the nation—on this tactic: by coolly refusing to either increase federal spending or lower federal taxes, he aims to reduce inflationary expectations and thereby hold down interest rates sufficiently to perk up economic recovery.

But the gargantuan size of deficit spending that led Mr. Nixon to decide against stimulating the economy militates against his tactic. Economists

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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BULLETIN

Committees of Congress are falling over each other in the rush to be the first in line for investigating this, that, and the other question raised by the Pentagon Papers. So far they seem to have overlooked what might turn out to be the most fascinating vein of all for curious prospectors: the origin, circumstances, and history of the Pentagon project itself that ended up producing the 7,000 pages of text and documents.

Surely this was a rather peculiar enterprise. Generally speaking, official accounts of wars await war's end. Not only are you usually too busy while the war is still on, but in truth, it is impossible to comprehend many aspects of a war—including its beginning—until it is finished. Then too, you would not usually expect your scribes to turn out a very adequate study when they have access to only a minor portion of the relevant data and persons, and none at all to the words, thoughts, or papers of the commander in chief.

This curious "study" was initiated by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1967 after he had become disillusioned about the war. It is said that Robert Kennedy, not only disillusioned but thinking about replacing Lyndon Johnson as President, gave McNamara the notion. McNamara put the job formally under Assistant Secretary of Defense John T. McNaughton of International Security Affairs (ISA). It is said that the work was done by "thirty to forty" persons, mostly from in or around the ISA office.

It would be interesting to have a complete list of these thirty to forty. If the two mentioned so far—Leslie Gelb and Daniel Ellsberg—are a fair sample, curious becomes curiouser. Both had turned convulsively against the war by project time; Ellsberg, at least, had apparently already lost his head by then (see paragraph below on his estimate of the Tet offensive, which occurred in mid-study). No one who has seen him on TV will doubt the extravagance and instability of his emotional make-up, hardly the type, one would think, to compile a balanced, objective record. As a matter of fact, the office of International Security Affairs, until President Nixon put Warren Nutter in charge of it, was a notorious haunt of ideologues.

And in fact, this study is at the farthest remove from a balanced, objective record. Consider typical examples of its rhetoric: "The dilemma of the U.S. involvement . . . was to use only limited means to achieve EXCESSIVE ends." "Our COMPLICITY in Diem's overthrow heightened our responsibility and our commitment." Strategic hamlets "failed DISMALLY." The planning "began to take on a kind of ABSURD quality." "In their BRUTALITY and their BLUNT repudiation of Diem's SOLEMN word to Nolting, [the 1963 pagoda raids] were a DIRECT, IMPUDENT SLAP IN THE FACE for the United States." The meeting of the National Security Council was "REVEALING" because of "the RAMBLING INABILITY to focus on the problem." The decision to build up combat support in 1961 was made "ALMOST BY DEFAULT . . . WITHOUT EXTENDED STUDY OR DEBATE" (an assertion the truth or falsity of which could not possibly have been known by the thirty to forty because they had no access to White House officials or records).

The words printed in caps and the rhetorical tone they impart have no place in either scholarly or bureaucratic prose. They are unmistakable signs that what we are dealing with is not history, not any sort of objective account or record, but an ex parte brief, a diatribe, an indictment. The study, insofar as its text has been published, is not a history or analysis of the war, but a disguised and twisted attack, not so much on the war as on the nation and its leaders and its people. It is as such that the media, to the accompaniment of their nauseating pieties, have ghoulishly presented it.

THE WEEK

ANY WAY YOU LOOK at Mme. Binh's new seven-point proposals for peace in Vietnam, they add up to two things. The U.S. will get its POWs back only if it withdraws its support from President Thieu and sets up what Mme. Binh describes as an interim "three-segment government" that will rule South Vietnam between the armistice and the new elections, which it will organize. That would mean the admission of the National Liberation Front into the Saigon government and the eventual takeover of the South by the Communist North—which was what the U.S. went into Vietnam in the first place to prevent. Once before the U.S. made a deal of this

★ The New York Times' Neil Sheehan, who was chiefly responsible for splattering those top-secret Pentagon papers all over the Times' front page, may face indictment from a federal grand jury in Boston. Sheehan may be charged with violating statutes against moving stolen property in interstate commerce and receiving secret documents without authorization.

★ Aides to former President Lyndon Johnson are convinced that Bobby Kennedy played a key role in the original decision to write the Pentagon papers. And the Atlanta Journal-Constitution quotes an informed source as saying that Bobby pushed the project so that LBJ would get "full credit" for "botching up the war." Kennedy reportedly planned to use the papers during his 1968 presidential campaign to "prove" that it was Johnson and Co. who widened the war.

ADOUT PAPERS

LBJ Ties Put Rusk In Dark?

By BILL SHIPP
Constitution Political Editor

Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk may have been kept in the dark about the Pentagon papers because of his unswerving loyalty to President Lyndon Johnson, according to an informed source.

The source also concluded that the classified "history" of the Vietnam war was meant, among other things, to be an indictment of the Johnson administration's mis-handling of the conflict.

Rusk, one of the three principals in the report along with Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, said Friday that no one attempted to interview him or to discover his feelings about the war for inclusion in the 47-volume report.

He said during an interview that he was unaware of the existence of the report until The New York Times began publishing it. A copy of the completed report was not sent to the State department until three days before Rusk was to leave office, and the secretary of state apparently did not know about it at the time.

President Johnson received a copy of the report about six months ago—three years after he left office—for inclusion in the LBJ library.

The informed source said he concluded the following about why Rusk was never interviewed by the authors of the Pentagon papers nor informed of the preparation of the documents:

1. The late Sen. Robert Kennedy probably had a hand in preparation of the papers, and he wanted to be certain that President Lyndon Johnson got "full credit" for botching up the war.

2. Rusk disliked Kennedy for what he viewed as the New York senator's repeated attempts to undercut President Johnson. So why cut Rusk in on preparation of the report?

3. The Pentagon papers were meant, among other things, to be an indictment of the Johnson administration's handling of the war. The papers were also meant to be revealed, if necessary, during the political campaign of 1968 to lay the blame for expansion of the war squarely on the shoulders of Johnson.

4. Unlike McNamara, Rusk was fully wedded to the policies of the Johnson administration. Rusk also was completely loyal to Johnson and would have tried to thwart any attempt to discredit the President.

5. Interviews and discussions with Rusk about Vietnam policy would have blunted the main thrust of the Pentagon papers which was to show that Johnson tried to deceive the American public about the war and made mistake after mistake in trying to conclude the conflict. Rusk would have been a Johnson advocate. His interpretations of what went on would be invaluable in a definitive history of the Vietnam war, but they would serve only to "fuzzy up" an indictment of Johnson's policies.

Reached at his home in Athens, Rusk refused to comment Sunday on the report.

Rusk said Friday that he did not believe then Defense Secretary Robert McNamara had given the report to the more than 36 volunteer analysts who compiled the report. He said he believed McNamara intended the report to be an "in-house" document, something that could be carried in "a loose-leaf notebook."

In an interview with The Constitution, Rusk said he found

See RUSK, Page 10-A

Rusk

(Continued from 1-A)

it "very strange" that no one attempted to talk to him about the report, although there are repeated references in the volume to what Rusk had in mind concerning Vietnam policy.

Some of the statements by the analysts who compiled the report are untrue, Rusk said Friday.

The Pentagon papers say Johnson was planning throughout 1964 to bomb Hanoi, despite his stop-the-war presidential campaign that year. Untrue, according to Rusk.

The papers indicate certain tactical decisions were made in Vietnam more to placate the American public than to try to bring North Vietnam to tow. Untrue, according to Rusk.

The papers indicate Rusk was ready to recommend use of nuclear weapons, under certain circumstances, in the Vietnam conflict. Untrue, according to Rusk.

BOMBING HALT

A Constitution reporter asked Rusk if it were not true that the bombing halt of March 1968 was really an attempt to placate the American public.

"Look," he snapped. "there never would have been an American in uniform shooting a weapon at anybody, had Ho Chi Minh not sent his guerrillas into South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and his guerrillas into Thailand. From the beginning, we wanted to see this thing end. We did not go through empty gestures to placate other people. We were trying to bring the wretched situation to an end. So whether or not we had much of a chance — we took chance after chance.

"We negotiated through all sorts of intermediaries, private and official, other governments in various parts of the world. Some people have said that we tried too hard on this negotiation business, that we might have misled Hanoi as to our determination in that sort of thing. Nevertheless, we kept trying. We did not want this war in any way, shape or form."

In addition to being wrong in parts, Rusk also questioned in the Friday interview why the names of the analysts who drew up the documents had not been made part of the papers. A foreword to the papers says the bias and prejudices of the authors should be taken into account.

McNAMARA PAPERS

William Macomber said only "a very small percentage of the DOD papers could be damaging if disclosed, and newspapers largely have refrained from publishing the sections. Macomber said only the Times "may have" printed some sensitive material. Macomber said he hoped one result of the disclosure of the papers would be that "the government will do a better job of declassifying the things that have become history." He said on the Today Show, the government moved to try to prevent publication of the material because it feared a newspaper might inadvertently reveal something that would harm US diplomatic efforts, not because it felt newspapers would deliberately print something it knew to be harmful. "We've never thought the newspapers were anything but patriots," he said. Macomb said some damage had been caused by the mere releas of the papers. He said one nation had told the United States it "simply could not deal with us in confidence." He refused to identify the nation, but said it was not Asian.

* *

Atlanta newspapers said Dean Rusk was kept in the dark about the secret papers because of his "unswervi loyalty" to LBJ, and that Sen. Robert Kennedy "probab had a hand in preparing the papers to make certain Johnson got "full credit" for botching up the war. The Atlanta Journal and Consitution quoted an "informed source" who said the top secret history of the war was meant to be an indictment of Johnson's mishandling of the conflict. Rusk said earlier he was "puzzled" beca no one attempted to interview him or to discover his feelings about the war for inclusion in the 47-volume report. Rusk said some of the statements by the analysts who compiled the papers were untrue. He questioned why the names of the analysts had not been made public along with the papers. The "informed source" concluded that Rusk was never interviewed by the authors of the papers. He was "completely loyal to Johnson and would have tried to thwart any attempt to discredit the President." The newspaper noted that

Bundy Favors Pullout Now, Raps Bombing

By Stuart Auerbach
Washington Post Staff Writer

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 30 —William P. Bundy said today that all U.S. combat troops should be gone from Vietnam by now.

"We still have a very significant presence there," said Bundy, who was assistant secretary of state in charge of Asian affairs for President Johnson an an early proponent of the American involvement in Vietnam.

"I would have liked to have seen it brought to zero much sooner than this," he said in a press conference following a tough two-hour interrogation by antiwar scientists at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting here.

Bundy, in his press conference, also opposed the current wave of bombing raids over North Vietnam. "I would doubt their usefulness very much indeed," he said.

Under questioning by the unruly antiwar scientists, Bundy said he favors setting a firm date for the withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces from Vietnam and would tie the date to the release of American prisoners.

He said he is not sure about leaving a "small" American training detachment in Vietnam. He said the United States should continue its support — economic and political — of the Thieu government.

Bundy, who left his State Department post in May 1969, admitted that the Johnson administration made "considerable mistakes" in not fully informing the American people about its Vietnam policy.

"More candor," he said "would have removed the rancid atmosphere which has so poisoned things over the past few years."

But Bundy denied that President Johnson and members of his administration lied about the Tonkin Gulf incident, which led to the Senate resolution expanding U.S. participation in the war.

Bundy said, "The senior members of the administration believed that attacks had taken place, that North Vietnam had acted to challenge the United States.

"The question of manipulation or deception doesn't really stand up. There may have been other [illegible] in-

He said he disapproved, however, of using the Tonkin Gulf resolution "to justify scales of action that had not been contemplated ... at the time. The resolution was stretched far beyond its true purport."

While calling the present policy a failure, Bundy said the United States was justified in moving into Vietnam in force in 1965.

At that time, he said, China was considered a real threat in Southeast Asia. Since then, he said, China has calmed its bellicose foreign policy and political conditions among the Southeast Asian nations have stabilized.

Bundy's admissions of past mistakes failed to satisfy the antiwar scientists, who made up more than half of the audience of about 300. They interrupted him constantly, and often stood up to cite "facts" that they said contradicted his views.

The participants in the meeting—Bundy; Leslie Gelb, director of the Pentagon group that prepared a history of the American intervention in Southeast Asia; and Morton H. Halperin, a former Defense Department analyst — had planned to sit on a podium in front of the room.

Before they arrived, however, members of the antiwar group, Science for the People, rearranged the room so that the participants were encircled by the audience.

The heckling varied from shouts of "murderer" and "liar" to questions as to whether Bundy would be willing to stand trial as a war criminal before an international tribunal.

Halperin ended the session abruptly when the dissidents refused to allow Gelb to read a prepared statement.

As the session broke up, plainclothesmen escorted Bundy through a rear door. Bundy went directly to a nearby room for the press conference.

Jeremy Stone, director of the Liberal Federation of American Scientists, called the event a "peoples' trial" of Bundy and criticized the AAAS for allowing it to go on.

Bundy, however, said he didn't feel it was a "peoples' trial," and he termed the hec-

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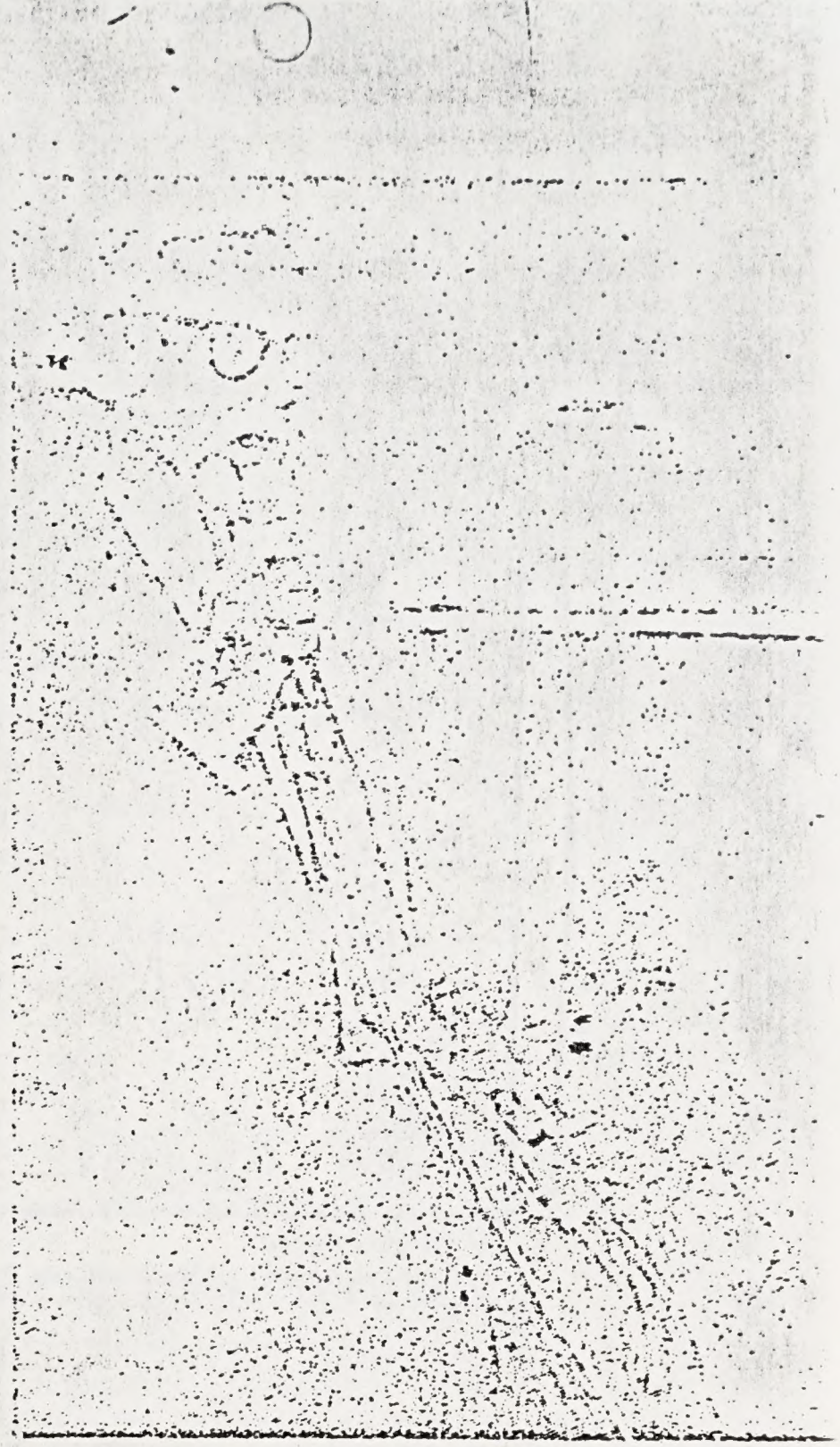

William P. Bundy attempts to answer a question during an AA

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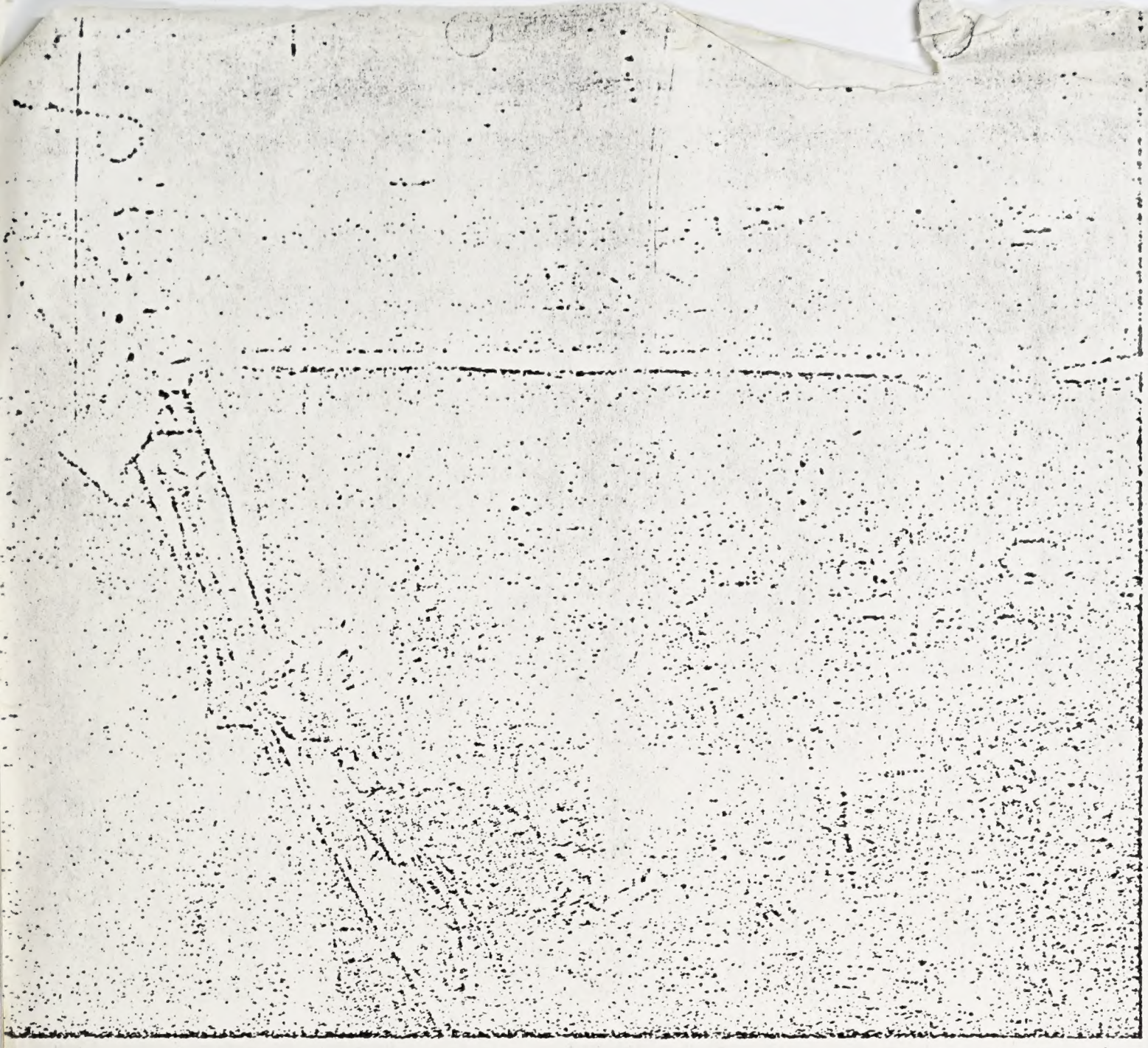

United Press International

am P. Bundy attempts to answer a question during an AAAS meeting, over the heckling of antiwar scientists.

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